

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBU #0058 0122034
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 122034Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6959
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 5849
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 5693
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JAN MONTEVIDEO 6070
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0067

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 000058

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AR](#) [PHUM](#)

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: FORMER PRESIDENT ISABEL PERON ARRESTED

Classified By: Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Ex-President Maria Estela Martinez de Peron (known as Isabel Peron) reportedly has been arrested in Madrid, Spain pursuant to a request from Mendoza judge Raul Acosta for suspicion of involvement in forced disappearances in 1976. The arrest warrant was sent to Interpol to request Peron be detained in Madrid, where the 75 year old widow of Argentine President Juan Peron now lives. The press and local political analysts are postulating that neither this judge, nor the one that recently ordered an investigation into the human rights abuses of the 1970/80s right-wing death squad Triple A, would have moved forward with these high-profile decisions without the tacit knowledge and support of the Kirchner administration. Although this is the first arrest warrant for pre-military dictatorship human rights abuses, the government's judicial investigations into human rights abuses in the 1970s remain limited to former government officials and neglect crimes committed by leftist guerrilla groups. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) Ex-President Maria Estela Martinez de Peron (known as Isabel Peron) reportedly has been arrested in Madrid, Spain pursuant to a request from Mendoza judge Raul Acosta for suspicion of involvement in the forced disappearance of a young man from Mendoza in February 1976, one month before the military coup that deposed her. The arrest warrant was sent to Interpol January 12 to request Peron be detained in Madrid, where the 75 year old widow and third wife of ex-President Juan Peron now lives. According to press reports, Acosta considers Isabel responsible for signing three decrees that authorized the arbitrary detention and disappearance of various people. "She was the President of the country when these crimes were committed. The detentions in San Rafael (province of Mendoza) were authorized by these decrees and carried out by the Army and the Mendoza police," Acosta is quoted as saying.

13. (U) The press and local political analysts are postulating that neither this judge, nor the one that recently ordered an investigation into the human rights abuses of the right-wing death squad Triple A, would have moved forward with these high-profile decisions without the tacit knowledge and support of the Kirchner administration. Federal judge Norberto Oyarbide announced earlier this week that he is investigating human rights abuses committed by the paramilitary group Triple A during the 1970s and early 1980s. Triple A was allegedly created in 1973 by Juan Peron's personal secretary and ex-Minister of Social Well-being Jose Lopez Rega and former Police Commissioner Alberto Villar to counter the threat of violence from leftist guerrilla groups, and continued its operations under Isabel Peron's presidency and throughout the military dictatorship. The only comment from the administration on the investigations of Triple A and the arrest warrant for Isabel Peron was a statement from

President Kirchner saying this is a matter of responsibility of the Argentine judiciary.

14. (C) COMMENT: The indictment of Isabel Peron and the Oyarbide investigation are the first judicial actions addressing pre-1976 coup human rights violations. These come on top of a growing number of judicial cases against military officers suspected of involvement in such abuses in the 1976-83 Dirty War period. These latest actions are likely to be followed by other such cases for pre-1976 abuses. Given the presence of many "leftist" Peronists (Montoneros and Montonero sympathizers) in the current government, no one expects for now any cases to be brought against former members of this guerrilla organization or any of the leftist groups that violently opposed both the Isabel Peron government and the military regime between 1976-83. In fact, the Argentine Supreme Court decision in 2005 that denied the extradition to Spain of accused ETA terrorist Lariz Iriondo is widely considered to have judicially codified the notion that crimes by non-state actors cannot be considered as human rights abuses in Argentina and are therefore subject to statute of limitations for their prosecution; this fact for now puts Montonero violence in the 1970s beyond the reach of the judiciary. That said, with the frequent change of "political" winds in Argentina, these latest judicial actions make it more likely that other past abuses, including violence by the Montoneros, will eventually be the target of judicial investigation. END COMMENT.

WAYNE